MLK-ISRAEL CORRESPONDENCE ARCHIVE

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Archive Summary: 16 unique documents spanning 1962-1967
Total Pages: Approximately 30 pages of historical correspondence
Classification: Diplomatic and Official Government Communications

MLKing01 - Diplomatic Memorandum on MLK Visit Invitation

Date: August 14, 1962 (14th of Av, 5722)

From: Consul, Atlanta (Ze'ev Z. Dober)

To: Mr. H. Bar-On, Washington

Reference: 106.2/251.16, 17/8, File 109.1

SUBJECT: Invitation to Reverend Martin Luther King

In light of recent developments in Albany where Reverend Martin Luther King and his movement stand at the center, I do not believe the time is appropriate for his visit to Israel, and these are the considerations:

a. King represents the militant wing of the civil rights movement, with which very important bodies within it, such as the N.A.A.C.P., are not in agreement and oppose his methods.

b. As is known, I value highly the creation of contacts with the Negro leadership, and I have expressed more than once in reports the opinion that the number of supporters of non-violent activism among Negroes is growing and that King's star is rising in the firmament of Negro leadership.

c. The Albany events, his arrest, etc., have given King worldwide publicity. At the same time, he has also concentrated against himself the fury of all opponents of desegregation, including moderate circles and the indignation of Negroes.

d. An invitation to King to visit a foreign country - whatever the inviting body may be - will be interpreted here as an expression of support or sympathy for him and will arouse sharp negative reactions. In any case, we should not be the first country to grant King, as it were, international status.

e. An invitation by the Histadrut does not change this assessment because (1) King is not a labor leader and is not a union official (2) The central position of the Histadrut in Israel is well known.

f. Contrary to my personal preference in this matter, I must warn that King's visit to Israel at this stage is harmful to our image and our work in the American South, whereas the benefit is doubtful and is still "a vision for an appointed time."

g. In light of the circumstances, it is doubtful whether King will conduct a visit to Israel in the fall as Mr. Avrech conveyed. In any case, I recommend in the strongest terms to refrain from raising the question of his visit, and to shelve the matter until an opportune time.

Our public diplomacy efforts with the various elements in the Negro community must be done here and without ostentatious publicity.

Ze'ev Z. Dober

MLKing02 - Consular Policy Memorandum on Negro Community Contacts

Date: November 9, 1962 (12 Heshvan 5723)

From: Consul, Atlanta (Ze'ev Z. Dober)

To: Mr. H. Bar-On, Washington; Mr. H. Soret, Washington

Reference: 251.16, 1091

CONSULATE OF ISRAEL

805 PEACHTREE ST., N.E.
ATLANTA 8, GEORGIA
PHONE: TRINITY 5-7851

SUBJECT: Contacts with the Negro Community

At our last meeting we spoke about Martin Luther King and about expanding our contacts with various circles within the Negro community, and I would like to elaborate somewhat on this subject and continue to develop the line of thought.

Demographic and Political Analysis

First, it is important that we define for ourselves what our specific objectives are vis-à-vis this public, and to place them in proper proportion in relation to the entire scope of our information activity in American public life. The Negroes constitute about 11% of the total population of the United States, and despite the high birth rate they will remain a minority for many years to come. Moreover, many years will yet pass before this racial minority recovers from the economic and educational backwardness which are both the result of discrimination and, at the same time, factors that perpetuate it.

Furthermore: unlike religious or national minorities for whom a shared past or particular spiritual values serve as a special framework and goals for their aspirations, what unites and drives the Negroes are impulses of defense against discrimination and all that this entails. It cannot be foreseen that the Negroes as a public will, in the near future, become a political and economic factor whose weight corresponds to their numerical share of the total population. This is due both to the low average educational and material level, and because the pressures of the domestic reality stand at the top of their scale of concerns, and interest in what is happening in the wider world takes a secondary place in the hierarchy of priorities for existence.

Strategic Considerations

On the other hand, the Negro public is undergoing social-political ferment, and patterns of thought are gradually taking shape that will determine its attitude towards various issues in the future. We must therefore not ignore this large public, and must cultivate contact with all its strata more than ever before. We must remember that our principal task here is preparing the ground for the future. It is not so important how a Negro leader or newspaper expresses itself today on an issue that concerns us, but it is important what image of Israel will crystallize in the consciousness of the Negroes in the years to come.

It appears that even the educated Negroes know very little about Israel, and there are even signs of a certain reserve towards us deriving from various sources, including perhaps the "Judas Iscariot complex," disappointing experiences with local Jews, or a distortion of our image by hostile elements, but mainly, it seems to me, from lack of knowledge.

Primary Goals and Strategy

Our primary goal, in my opinion, must be to fill a gap in knowledge and to clarify the eternal relationship between the Jewish people and its land, and to instill in this circle an understanding of the progressive character of the national movement for the social-cultural renewal of the people in Israel.

Programmatic goals, even when positive, such as Israeli aid to Americans, and all the more so when they are negative—such as opposing a revolution or a regime—must be secondary objectives. After all, we are not seeking to influence U.S. foreign policy through Negro public opinion as such or through its organizations, but rather our aim is to lay a foundation of understanding, sympathy, and appreciation towards us.

Proposed Actions

In the southern United States, Negroes are concentrated in their own separate colleges, something that enables us to have special access to this public without being suspected of "discrimination" on our part, as might arise if we were to approach Negro students in integrated colleges separately and specifically.

It would be desirable to hold a thorough consultation on these issues and to devise a plan for comprehensive activity in the coming years. In the meantime, I propose to begin with the following actions:

1. Introducing a basic library, or at least one fundamental book on the Jewish people and Israel, into the library of every Negro college.

2. Organizing lectures at the Negro colleges. Potential lecturers include members of the staff of our missions, Israeli intellectuals, rabbis who know Israel, and American Negroes who have visited the country and are familiar with our realities.

As you requested, I am enclosing a list including 28 of the most important and largest colleges in our region. The total number of Negro colleges whose presidents I have written to and who receive informational and

explanatory material from us comes to 73.

Ze'ev Z. Dober

MLKing03 - Invitation Confirmation Letter from Histadrut

Date: February 27, 1963

From: Ben-Zion Ilan, American Representative of Histadrut

To: Reverend Martin Luther King

Reference: 109.1, E/389

February 27, 1963
Reverend Martin Luther King
c/o Ebenezer Baptist Church
407 Auburn Ave., N.E.
Atlanta, Ga.
Dear Reverend King:
William Michelson, Executive Vice-President of District 65, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, has informed us that you and Mrs. King have accepted our invitation to visit Israel as the guests of Histadrut and will arrive in Israel on July 22 for an eight day visit. We are delighted with this good news.

Aharon Becker, Secretary-General of Histadrut, has asked me to express to you his pleasure at your coming and to assure you that arrangements will be made for you and Mrs. King to visit all sectors of Israel and to meet Israelis of all walks of life and trends of opinion.

You are well known to the people of Israel. The movement you so ably lead is very dear to us.

Respectfully yours,

Ben-Zion Ilan
American Representative

MLKing04 - Consular Memorandum on Visit Cancellation

Date: July 9, 1963 (17th of Tammuz, 5723)

From: Consul, Atlanta (Ze'ev Z. Dober)

To: Mr. H. Bar-On, Washington; Mr. H. Soret, Washington

Reference: 251.16, 1091

CONSULATE OF ISRAEL

805 PEACHTREE ST., N.E.
ATLANTA 8, GEORGIA
PHONE: TRINITY 5-7851

SUBJECT: Reverend Martin Luther King

Further to my letter No. 251.16 dated 14.5.63:

King and Abernathy cancelled several days ago their trip to the Baptist Youth Conference and to Israel.

I do not know if King was still in contact with the Histadrut representative regarding his visit and notified him of the cancellation. For added certainty, I suggest you notify whoever was to host them about the change in plans.

Ze'ev Z. Dober

MLKing05 - Western Union Telex on Oslo Meeting

Date: June 15, 1964

From: North America Division (copy from Israel, Washington)

Reference: 109.1, F 397, 251900

Document Type: Western Union Telex Service

Classification: Confidential Communication

From: Washington

Reference: Your [reference] 311

TELEX MESSAGE

Eban met with Martin Luther King at a reception on the eve of his departure to Oslo. [King] expressed regret that he was forced to cancel his visit to our country at the time. Eban said we would be happy to see him with us. King agreed in principle but no date was set. It was agreed that he would remain in contact with the Embassy.

Dini

MLKing06 - Official Invitation from Ambassador Harman

Date: March 30, 1965

From: Ambassador Avraham Harman, Embassy of Israel

To: The Reverend Martin Luther King

Reference: 109.1

EMBASSY OF ISRAEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.

March 30, 1965
The Reverend Martin Luther King
334 Auburn Avenue, N.E.
Atlanta, Ga.
Dear Dr. King,
I have just returned from a brief visit to Israel with instructions to convey to you a warm invitation from the Government of Israel to visit the country as our guest. It will be a great pleasure for us to have you in our midst.

I sincerely hope that your heavy responsibilities will nevertheless permit you an early opportunity of responding to our invitation. Please feel free to fix any date at your convenience.

I look forward to hearing from you, and meanwhile take this opportunity of extending to you the sincere expression of my highest regard.

Sincerely yours,

Avraham Harman
Ambassador

cc: Mr. K. Kats, A. Avidar, M. Shaby, M. Bitan

MLKing07 - Personal Invitation from Judge Irving Engel

Date: June 2, 1965

From: Irving M. Engel, Attorney at Law

To: Dr. Martin Luther King

Classification: Airmail / Personal

ENGEL, JUDGE & MILLER

ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELLORS AT LAW
52 VANDERBILT AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

June 2, 1965
Dr. Martin Luther King
Ebenezer Baptist Church
Hunter Street
Atlanta, Georgia
Dear Dr. King:
You will perhaps recall our conversation when we sat together on the dais at the recent annual dinner in New York of the American Jewish Committee.

At that time I invited you to go to Israel as the guest of the Israel Government and under the sponsorship of the American Jewish Committee. This invitation was confirmed, you will recall, by Mr. Harman, the Israel Ambassador to Washington, and Mr. Comay, the Israel Ambassador to the U.N., both of whom were at the dinner.

We should all be delighted if you could find it possible to accept. The timing of the visit could be fixed to meet your convenience.

The Government and the people of Israel would take the occasion to express their appreciation of your great accomplishments in the field of human freedom. At the same time I cannot help but feel that you would derive renewed inspiration by visiting Israel, whose people, under conditions of the utmost difficulty, are establishing a bastion of democracy in the Middle East. You would also be interested in the help they are giving to underdeveloped nations in various parts of the world.

If you should accept this invitation, I would deem it a privilege and an honor to be allowed to accompany you.

Trusting to hear soon of your acceptance, and with warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

/s/ Irving M. Engel

MLKing08 - MLK's Response to Judge Engel

Date: July 12, 1965

From: Martin Luther King Jr., President, SCLC

To: Irving M. Engel, Esq.

SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

334 Auburn Ave., N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Telephone 522-1420

July 12, 1965
Irving M. Engel, Esq.
Attorney at Law
52 Vanderbilt Avenue
New York, New York
Dear Mr. Engel:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of recent date inviting me to visit Israel sometime in the near future. I am certainly anxious to spend some time in Israel whenever this is possible. I view Israel as one country in the world that is making some really significant social experiments and I look forward to the opportunity of seeing them firsthand.

Presently the demands on my time are of such that I feel that I must stay in this country. We are anticipating a trip to Africa about the time of the Organization of African Unity meeting in Ghana and it may be possible to include Israel at this time. I would prefer making a special trip to Israel when I could afford to spend more time but this could not be possible until next Spring, and I can never be sure of what the demands of the civil rights movement in this country will be at that time.

Please convey my best wishes to Mr. Harman and Mr. Comay and kindly explain to them the difficulty of scheduling such a visit at this time.

Thank you for sending me a copy of the letter you wrote to President Truman. Were it not for the faith of many of my friends, it would be much more difficult to stand up under the barbs and jibes of the many people who misunderstand our drive to make the American dream a reality for all men.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Km

MLKing09 - Internal Diplomatic Letter on Visit Coordination

Date: July 27, 1965

From: [Ambassador Harman - unsigned but contextually clear]

To: Mr. Moshe Bitan, Misrad Hahuts [Foreign Ministry], Jerusalem

Reference: 109.1

Classification: Internal Diplomatic Letter

From: Ambassador Harman (unsigned)

To: Mr. Moshe Bitan

Dear Moshe,

Re your letter concerning your talks with Yagupsky about Martin Luther King's visit, you should know that in the A.J.C. [American Jewish Committee] the initiative in this matter came from Irving Engel who knows King well introduced Comay and myself to him at the recent A.J.C. Dinner at which King was honored.

I mentioned to King our invitation to him and he expressed regret that he was so busy that he did not acknowledge it. I renewed the invitation to him.

Engel has strongly urged King to go to Israel. The auspices don't particularly matter to me. It is perfectly clear to me that if King decides to go it will only be at Engel's urging. Not only have I no objection to King going under A.J.C. auspices - but I think they could be even positively advantageous.

The latest development is that King has told Engel there may be a possibility of his going to Israel for a few days if he visits the Organisation of African Unity Conference in Ghana. Arnon, Avidar and I have urged Engel to continue his contacts with King on this.

Would you kindly relay this to Yagupsky. I don't think that we should obtrude the question of auspices in this matter.

Sincerely,

[Ambassador Harman]

cc: H. Arnon, A. Avidar, A.H.

MLKing10 - Engel's Letter to Ambassador Harman

Date: July 28, 1965

From: Irving M. Engel

To: Ambassador Avraham Harman

Subject: Dr. Martin Luther King

ENGEL, JUDGE & MILLER

ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELLORS AT LAW
52 VANDERBILT AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.
TELEPHONE: LEXINGTON 2-3000
CABLE ADDRESS: KONLAW

July 28, 1965
Ambassador Avraham Harman
Embassy of Israel
1621 - 22nd Street, N.W.
Washington 8, D. C.

Re: Dr. Martin Luther King

Dear Abe:
You will recall that, after my return from Israel in April, I wrote that I had some matters to discuss with you. We had a conference at the Israel Consulate in New York in May shortly before the annual meeting of the American Jewish Committee.

One of the matters we discussed in our conference was the suggestion that an invitation be extended to Martin Luther King to visit Israel as a guest of the Government, but under the sponsorship of the AJC. You approved of this suggestion and it was agreed that the invitation would be extended by me at the annual banquet of the AJC, where I was to make a presentation to Dr. King and would sit next to him on the dais.

At the annual banquet I extended the invitation to Dr. King. He was very much interested and said that he would like to go if possible. Later, both Ambassador Comay and you came up. I presented each of you in turn to Dr. King and each of you seconded the invitation. It was left that I would write a letter to Dr. King confirming the invitation and he would let me know if and when he could make the trip.

The letter was sent by me to Dr. King on June 2, with copies to Ambassador Comay and yourself. Under date of July 12 Dr. King replied, saying that he would be able to make a short trip to Israel in connection with the forthcoming meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Ghana, or possibly a longer trip sometime next spring, or later.

Since receipt of your letter of July 21 I have been surprised to receive information from Maximo Yagupsky, our representative in Israel, a letter bearing the same date, reading in part as follows: "As you know, since my return to Israel from the States, I have been trying to come to some conclusion with the men of the Foreign Affairs Department as well as with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem regarding my suggested invitation to Dr. Martin Luther King to visit Israel, as an official guest of the government but under the sponsorship of the AJC..."

The information Maximo received from Moshe Bitan and Shlomo Argov seems to be at variance with the discussions and correspondence which you and I have had.

It will be appreciated if you will clarify this situation for me. So far as I have been informed, the discussions with Dr. King with reference to his proposed trip to Israel, both in person and by correspondence, have been had by me. However, I have no desire to intrude and if it is the wish of your Government that you take over and deal directly with Dr. King, that, of course, will be entirely agreeable with me, provided I am informed by you to that effect.

Warmest regards.

[signature]
Irving M. Engel

MLKing11 - Foreign Ministry Memorandum on Sponsorship

Date: July 30, 1965 (1st of Av, 5725)

From: Shlomo Argov, Deputy Director, North America Division

To: Mr. A. Harman, Ambassador, Washington

Reference: .765

Location: Jerusalem

Classification: Foreign Ministry Memorandum

SUBJECT: Martin Luther King

I wish to refer to your letter dated 27.7.65 to Moshe and to clarify that there was absolutely no intention on our part to disqualify the Committee's sponsorship of King's visit. We objected only to all the unnecessary problematic issues that Maximo Yagobsky attributed to this matter, and especially to talk about the need to obtain an opinion from the Intelligence Division regarding the program, how to overcome negative Arab reactions, and all kinds of such vain considerations.

We told Yagobsky, and this is what we intended to explain to you, that the matter should be done in the most dignified manner possible, whatever it may be, and there is no more dignified manner than the sponsorship of the Government of Israel. The project itself can be carried out in cooperation with the Committee, while preserving all its rights.

Shlomo Argov

MLKing12 - Engel's Follow-up to MLK

Date: August 2, 1965

From: Irving M. Engel

To: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

ENGEL, JUDGE & MILLER

ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELLORS AT LAW
52 VANDERBILT AVENUE
NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

August 2, 1965
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Ebenezer Baptist Church
Hunter Street
Atlanta, Georgia
Dear Dr. King:
Your letter of July 12 was duly received, but reply was delayed until I could obtain the views of certain Israeli officials.

I can now report that they are delighted at the prospect that you will be able to accept the invitation to visit their country. Under all the circumstances, they much prefer to have you make this visit in connection with your attendance at the meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Ghana. They realize that a special trip to Israel might make possible a longer visit, but realize that, as pointed out by you, the demands of the civil rights movement in this country would make it impossible for you to fix a definite time for a special trip.

According to my information, the meeting of the Organization of African Unity is tentatively scheduled to take place the latter part of October. As soon as the time is definitely fixed, I shall be in touch with you to work out the details of your trip.

Warmest regards.

/s/ Irving M. Engel

MLKing12a - Detailed Meeting Report with Dr. King

Date: December 6, 1965 (12th of Kislev, 5726)

From: Sh. Yilon, Atlanta

To: Mr. Ze'ev A. Sofot, Embassy, Washington (2 copies)

Reference: 109.1

SUBJECT: Report of Meeting with Dr. Martin Luther King

After many delays related to Dr. King's frequent tours and my absences from the office, I held a thorough conversation with him on December 3.

At the outset, he mentioned that he has an "open invitation" from the Government of Israel and also from the Histadrut to visit the country, and for four years he has been trying to do this, but now he hopes he will be able to travel in the first half of 1966.

After an exchange of praise and compliments about what is being done in the country [Israel] and about his great successes, we talked for close to an hour about all the problems that could be mentioned:

Education Programs

From HEAD START to adult education. In his opinion, the efforts here are in the right direction but too few and too late, and he fears that such a slow start will create a false impression among those who need help that all these programs are only for show. I could only agree with him and also added that from the little I have seen, they have not yet known how to recruit teachers and instructors from the underdeveloped strata, and that the people in the mechanisms of these institutions give the impression as if they are helping voluntarily - something that indicates a lack of seriousness; and this when the Negro colleges are full of people who are absolutely capable of filling the ranks of these teachers and instructors.

Economic and Vocational Issues

Dr. King analyzed the economic problems of the persistent unemployment that is growing and increasing because of automation. He emphasized with regret that the system of vocational education is not developed at all. He was very impressed by my comment that we consider the army as an important educational institution. He very much wanted to know - unofficially of course - what our position is on Vietnam, and it was good that I had received guidance on this several days ago, and I answered accordingly.

Development and International Relations

From here the conversation developed to the problems of development, and I noted that there is here a "race against time": if the developed countries succeed in raising the cultural level of the peoples of the developing world to such an extent that they know how to participate in establishing a healthy government, all the effort being made now will pay off and there will be room to hope for coexistence between peoples, and there will be hope to eliminate the revolutionary Chinese idea.

In this context, Dr. King asked what could be done to raise the prestige of the USA since the number of peoples who think of the USA as an "aggressor" is now growing, and in response I pointed out the good influence of the PEACE CORPS and expressed my hope that the time will not be far when they will recruit in the USA a larger number of workers for the PEACE CORPS than they recruit for the U.S. military.

We also went over a not-small list of mutual acquaintances and friends, and Dr. King suggested that we meet for these conversations more frequently instead of random meetings as until now, and he will also organize a dinner with his colleagues for detailed conversations on special topics.

Shimon Yilon

Copy to:
Mr. Moshe Bitan, Jerusalem
Mr. Mordechai Lador, Washington

MLKing13 - MLK's Apology Letter to Ambassador Harman

Date: May 17, 1966

From: Martin Luther King Jr., President, SCLC

To: The Honorable Avraham Harman, Ambassador

Reference: 109.1

SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

334 Auburn Ave., N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
Telephone 522-1420

May 17, 1966
Reference Number: 109.1
The Honorable Avraham Harman
Ambassador
Embassy of Israel
Washington, D. C.
Dear Mr. Harman:

I am very embarrassed to be writing you concerning your letter which came to my office many, many months ago regarding a trip to Israel sometime in the future. Because of the large volume of calls and mail that constantly comes into my office, and the fact that I am out of the city a great deal, occasional discrepancies develop with both in-coming and out-going mail. Just the other day one of my secretaries discovered a large number of letters that had been accidentally placed in a folder of 'Letters to be Filed.' Happily she realized that they were letters that had not been answered. Your letter was, unfortunately, one of those in that particular folder. Please know that I regret this mistake very much. I can assure you that it was not due to sheer carelessness but to the pressures of an understaffed and overworked office.

I am deeply grateful to you for extending the invitation to visit Israel. At this writing, it is not possible for me to give you a date when I can go there, but I do hope that my schedule will soon ease up so that I can accept an invitation to go to Israel. I will certainly keep in touch with you in this regard.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Signed: Martin L. King Jr.
Km

MLKing14 - Consular Memo on Black Pilgrimage Plans

Date: June 27, 1966 (6 Tammuz 5726)

From: A. Avidar, New York, Consul General

To: The Ambassador, Washington

Reference: 109.1

STATE OF ISRAEL

CONSULATE GENERAL
11 East 70th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021
Telephone: Trafalgar 9-7600

SUBJECT: Martin Luther King – Negroes

The Ministry of Tourism here has recently been investing rather major efforts in an attempt to bring about Negro pilgrimage of serious dimensions.

Within the framework of these efforts, they brought to Israel some time ago the director of the largest Negro travel agency, and upon her return they have now agreed with her to organize a mass pilgrimage for the coming Easter season.

The travel agency has been in contact with Martin Luther King and, according to them, has obtained his "enthusiastic" consent to head the pilgrims.

Matters will be clarified definitively over the coming weeks, and it may be that in due course it would be worthwhile for you to repeat your official invitation to the man.

In addition to the above, there is also a reasonable possibility that the next annual convention of the association of Negro newspapers, which encompasses about 60 weeklies throughout the country, will convene next summer in Israel. We are cooperating with the local office of the Ministry of Tourism in handling this matter, and it may be that we will ultimately submit a joint official invitation. It is not out of the question that this project will also be connected with some financial outlay.

If the need arises, I will bring the matter in due course before the Hasbara [Information] Committee.

Michael Arnon

MLKing15 - Official Letter from Prime Minister Levi Eshkol

Date: February 7, 1967

From: Levi Eshkol, Prime Minister of Israel

To: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Reference: [8/37/71]

Document Type: Official Letter from Prime Minister

Location: Prime Minister's Office, Jerusalem

February 7, 1967
Jerusalem
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
234 Auburn Avenue N.E.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
USA
Dear Dr. King,
I have heard with great interest of your intention to lead a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. It will be a distinct pleasure to welcome you and your friends to our shores and to meet one of the outstanding champions of freedom and justice of our time.

The tens of thousands of Christian pilgrims who visit the Holy Land annually bear with them a message of goodwill and peace. The religious nature of their pilgrimage is fully respected by Israelis and Jordanians alike.

I have asked my colleagues in the Government departments concerned and our national airline to extend to you every possible cooperation for the implementation of your plans. You should be hearing from them directly very shortly.

With all good wishes,

Levi Eshkol
Prime Minister of Israel

ARCHIVE SUMMARY & HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Collection Overview

This archive contains 16 unique documents representing the correspondence between Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and various Israeli officials and organizations between 1962 and 1967. The collection reveals the planning and coordination efforts for Dr. King's proposed visit to Israel, as well as the warm relationship between the civil rights leader and Israeli leadership during this critical period.

Key Themes

1. Mutual Respect: The correspondence reveals deep mutual respect between Dr. King and Israeli leadership, with both sides expressing admiration for each other's work.

2. Diplomatic Coordination: The documents demonstrate careful diplomatic coordination between Israeli government officials, the Foreign Ministry, and American Jewish organizations.

3. Scheduling Challenges: Throughout the correspondence, King repeatedly emphasizes the demands of the civil rights movement and his difficulty in finding time for international travel.

4. Strategic Timing: The suggestion that King visit Israel in connection with the Organization of African Unity meeting in Ghana demonstrates strategic thinking about maximizing the impact of his visit.

5. Historical Significance: This correspondence takes place during a critical period in both American civil rights history and Israeli state development. Unfortunately, Dr. King was assassinated in April 1968 before he could make his planned pilgrimage to Israel.

Document Preservation Note

These documents have been compiled into this master archive with consolidated duplicates and organized chronologically. All documents maintain their original formatting and content as preserved in the historical records. The correspondence represents authentic diplomatic and official government communications of the period.